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OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE JOINT ARENA:
A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION

by

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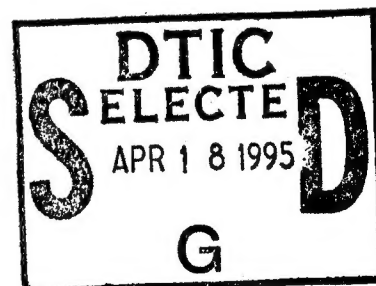
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Abstract of

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE JOINT ARENA: A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION

The range of military operations is wide, touching many missions each with varying and unique requirements. In order to provide a coherent response, recent doctrine has emphasized an enhanced structure under the Joint Forces commander (JFC) in order to optimize unity of effort and unified action.

At the Operational level, the JFC J-2 is responsible for ensuring appropriate intelligence support to the JFC and subordinate commands. As part of this, supporting joint intelligence doctrine further charges the JFC J-2 with providing relevant intelligence in response to JFC-developed requirements. However, structuring a support organization to respond to intelligence requirements may limit the J-2's initiative to anticipate requirements.

For this reason, the JFC J-2 must beware of using intelligence doctrine as an "ideal" in itself. He or she must still independently divine and anticipate the overarching "Operational Intelligence" and "Operational-level Intelligence" needs intrinsic to the JFC's success. Moreover, he or she must clearly articulate the role of intelligence at the Operational level in order to implement a supporting framework.

**OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE JOINT ARENA:
A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION**

INTRODUCTION

Military doctrine seeks to answer the question, "For what military ends shall military means be employed?"¹ Nowhere has this been more evident than in recent joint military doctrine. In the midst of the current rush to develop doctrine for virtually all areas of military endeavor, one should remember that doctrine treats a subject only in terms of general, non-binding principles.

In contrast, military personnel traditionally operate in a highly organized and detailed environment. They prefer to deal with explicit guidance and standardized procedures, rather than general concepts. Unfortunately, this potential disconnect between the actual and the perceived purposes of doctrine provides grounds for its inappropriate application as a solid "blueprint" for any area. Even complementary doctrinal publications which identify and standardize various tasks, such as the "Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (JTTP) for Intelligence Support to Operations," do not provide the whole answer.

As a result, military planners may try to use doctrine as a desired endstate itself, something for which it was never

¹ Barry R. Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 13-14.

intended. Among those squarely faced with trying to "find their way" are the military planners at the Operational level -- the Joint Force commander (JFC) and his or her staff, including the J-2.

The JFC J-2, whether at the Theater or the Joint Task Force (JTF) level, must ensure that intelligence support is provided to joint operations. To do this, he or she shall likely rely heavily on supporting principles available in joint intelligence doctrine. After all, "Intelligence doctrine provides principles of intelligence for effective support of JFCs and their forces."²

Current joint intelligence doctrine specifies that the J-2 and supporting staff provide relevant intelligence in response to levied requirements. These intelligence requirements are identified based on the commander's guidance and direction, estimate of the situation, and objectives.³ The pitfall is that the J-2 may employ joint intelligence doctrine in a too literal sense. If convinced that intelligence is provided in response to JFC-levied requirements, then the J-2 may focus on operating in a "reactive" mode, struggling to make the intelligence system respond after the fact to stated requirements.

Although correct to some extent, the Operational level J-2 and staff may limit their initiative with this approach and put themselves in the position of forever "playing catch up."

² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Operations, Joint Pub 2-0, (Washington, DC: 1993), p. I-3.

³ Ibid., pp. I-1 - I-2.

Furthermore, dependence upon the idea of satisfying intelligence requirements may lead to developing quantifiable, but misleading, measures of success. For example, the J-2 may believe that his or her intelligence organization did a great job in satisfying 230 of 235 individual Requests for Information (RFIs). However, upon closer inspection those five unsatisfied RFIs may have involved elements critical to the success of the operational planner.

In addition to such levied requirements, the JFC J-2 must recognize the overarching Operational requirements for intelligence and translate them into a clear sense of direction for the intelligence organization. Whether working for a theater commander-in-chief (CINC) or a Joint Task Force (JTF) commander, the J-2 must independently define the direction and focus of his or her staff's efforts. He or she must divine the grander scope of his or her Operational responsibility -- distinguishing and satisfying intrinsic "Operational Intelligence" and "Operational-level Intelligence" needs. This is the real job of the Operational level J-2.

LEVELS OF WAR AND THE SUPPORTED COMMANDER

An accepted general basis (or *raison d'être*) for intelligence is that it must support some endeavor. It does not exist for its own sake. In order to understand either the components or focus of Operational Intelligence, one should first

examine the relationship between the various levels of war and the responsible command echelon.

Dating back to Sun Tzu, the distinct natures of strategy and tactics in general military art have been widely accepted. In 1927, General-Major Aleksandr Andreevich Svechin (1878-1938) of the Soviet Army was credited as the first theorist to address a new, third category of military art, distinct from those of strategy and tactics. In his magnum opus Strategy, Svechin developed the term "Operational Art" to refer to this category by which entire operations are to be planned and executed. Operational Art is a means to link the achievement of tactical success with the fulfillment of strategic goals.⁴

Since then, the very nature of strategic, operational, and tactical military art and their corresponding levels of warfare have been the subject of much examination and appraisal. In American joint military doctrine, three basic levels of war have been delineated: Strategic, Operational, and Tactical.⁵

Strategic Level of War

The Strategic Level of War is defined as:
". . .the level at which a nation or group of nations determines national or alliance security objectives and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives."⁶

⁴ Aleksandr A. Svechin, Strategy, trans. (Minneapolis, MN: East View Publications, 1992), pp. 68-69, 73-74.

⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Basic National Defense Doctrine, Joint Pub 0-1, Proposed Final Pub, (Washington, DC: 1991), p. IV-2.

⁶ Ibid., p. IV-3.

The command element at this level is usually considered to be either the national leader or a direct representative (e.g. the President via the National Command Authorities (NCA)).

Operational Level of War

The Operational Level of War is defined as:

"...the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations. Activities at this level...ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives."⁷

Although undesignated, command at this level could be exercised by a unified theater commander, a unified functional commander, or even an autonomous joint task force directly under the NCA's own command and outside a theater combatant command.⁸

Tactical Level of War

Finally, the Tactical Level of War is defined as:

"... that level at which battle and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives."⁹

Within the combatant commands, tactical level of war is largely executed by the individual Service forces, albeit in the larger joint or combined context.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., p. IV-5.

⁸ Ibid., pp. IV-5-IV-6.

⁹ Ibid., p. IV-20.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. IV-21.

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE: WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

Given the above definitions, the linkage can now be expanded to include the relationship of intelligence support organic to the respective level of command. Current joint intelligence doctrine states the JFC is responsible for intelligence support to operations.¹¹ Using this basic principle, one may surmise that the J-2 is responsive at each particular level of war is directly responsible for ensuring intelligence support to his or her command element.

A review of existing joint intelligence doctrine (Joint Pub 2-0) provides an entire chapter on "Joint Intelligence Responsibilities." As identified in that chapter, Table 1 illustrates the relationship between level of war, command echelon, and organic intelligence support organizations associated with the three levels of warfare.

Does this mean that forces at each level of war may rely only on their level-specific organizations for intelligence support? The answer is no. Although neither directly mandated nor guaranteed, joint doctrine does provide for intelligence support between superior and subordinate joint forces to satisfy level-specific requirements and ensure unity of intelligence effort.¹²

¹¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Operations, Joint Pub 2-0, (Washington, DC: 1993), p. IV-3.

¹² Ibid., pp.IV-5 - IV-7.

Table 1: Level of War-Command Echelon-
Organic Intelligence Support
Relationship

Level of War	Commander	Direct Supporting Intelligence Organization (Organic to level)
STRATEGIC	President/ NCA	Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) & Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); Department of State (American Foreign Service and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research); Director, National Security Agency (NSA); Director, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA); Director, Defense Mapping Agency (DMA); Director, National Reconnaissance Office (NRO); Director, Central Imagery Office (CIO); Chiefs of Military Services (and supporting service intelligence organizations)
OPERATIONAL	Theater Commander (Combattant Command)	Theater J2 organization; Theater (Regional) Joint Intelligence Center (JIC); Theater-specific military service intelligence organizations
TACTICAL	Tactical (Subordinate) Force/Unit Commander	Service Component intelligence organization; Organic service component intelligence organizations

[NOTE: Although not shown, the Joint Task Force (JTF) commander usually operates at a **hybrid** level, incorporating features from both the Operational and the Tactical levels. Nonetheless, the JTF command will include a staff intelligence element (J-2) and limited organic intelligence support organization.]

Therefore, looking at all of the above principles one can conclude that the J-2 at the Operational level is actually caught in the middle with three duties to fulfill:

(1) provide direct intelligence support to the Theater CINC, (functioning at the Operational level),

(2) ensure that appropriate non-organic intelligence support from the Strategic and Operational levels is provided to the Tactical (Subordinate) Force commander(s) to optimize successful tactical planning and operations, and

(3) ensure that appropriate theater intelligence reporting from the Operational and Tactical levels are provided to the Strategic-level command intelligence organization to facilitate unity of intelligence effort.

INTELLIGENCE AT THE OPERATIONAL-LEVEL VERSUS OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Despite current emphasis on defining terms and developing doctrine, the make-up and foci of "Operational Intelligence" and "Operational-level Intelligence" more often than not bring to mind a variety of connotations rather than explicit and practical definitions or standards.

In 1990, a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College questioned whether adequate doctrine on operational-level intelligence was available for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture.¹³ Her conclusion was doctrine at that time was inadequate due to a complete absence of promulgated doctrine dealing with Operational Intelligence, and the lack of a precise definition of Operational-level Intelligence. In her opinion, these

¹³ Major Linda L. Linden, USA, "Operational Level Intelligence: An Alternative Approach," Unpublished Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: 1990, pp. 1-2.

inadequacies had resulted in a misplaced emphasis on intelligence management, vice the actual nature of intelligence needed by the operational level commander.¹⁴

There is a formal definition both accepted throughout DoD and published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Operational Intelligence - Intelligence that is required for planning and conducting campaigns and major operations to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations.¹⁵

While true, the above definition may be argued as being vague and therefore ineffective.¹⁶ In short, "Operational Intelligence" has been defined solely in terms of the intended use of the intelligence, rather than in terms of its constituent elements or focus.

Therefore, the Operational J-2 must leap beyond joint intelligence doctrine. He or she must search for the "substance" of intelligence support -- what Operational Intelligence elements or focus must be provided to the JFC to afford success. The J-2 cannot afford to become wrapped up in the "form" of intelligence support, such as focusing his or her efforts so narrowly as to answer specific requests for information, while overlooking critical intelligence requirements not articulated by the JFC.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 30-32.

¹⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Department of Defense (DoD) Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Joint Pub 1-02, (Washington, DC: 1994), p. 275.

¹⁶ Linden, pp. 4-5.

One could consider that intelligence produced for singular assimilation at the Operational level is Operational-level Intelligence. The terms "Operational-level Intelligence" and "Operational Intelligence" are batted back and forth, almost interchangeably, throughout Intelligence doctrine. But, should they be?

Presently, U.S. Army doctrine goes into greater detail as to components of intelligence at the Operational level:

"... At the operational level of war the joint and combined intelligence system does not concentrate just on the collection, identification, location, and analysis of strategic and operational centers of gravity. It also must focus its production effort downward and maximize efforts on warfighting priority intelligence requirements (PIR):

- Basic (or finished) intelligence,
- Strategic indications and warning,
- Tactical warning,
- Current intelligence reporting,
- Intelligence-preparation-of-the-battlefield (IPB) on an operational or theater basis,
- Targeting intelligence,
- Battle damage assessment and poststrike assessment,
- Collection requirement management (synchronization of intelligence product report).

The operational-level intelligence organizations also provide unique counterintelligence, technical intelligence, human intelligence, signals intelligence, and security countermeasures services."¹⁷

¹⁷ U.S. Army, The Army in Theater Operations, FM 100-7, Draft, (Washington, DC: 1994), p. 4-27.

Upon closer scrutiny only one of the above items is key to the application of Operational Art. The identification of enemy centers of gravity is crucial to the application of Operational Art and ensuring the fulfillment of strategic goals. The Operational level commander must not only know the enemy centers of gravity upon which to take aim, but also the success of his or her subsequent actions against those centers of gravity. This is the core requirement or "substance" of intelligence, regardless of source or sophistication of analysis, which must be the focus of the Operational level J-2.

Other emphases for the J-2 have been proposed in the past, such as recommendations as developing elements of enhanced Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB),¹⁸ and the divining of enemy operational-level linkages¹⁹ and decisive points.²⁰ The end result is still the same. All of these other proposals ultimately boil down to identifying and evaluating enemy centers of gravity. This may be considered the "substance" of intelligence, and the acid test for Operational-level Intelligence.

¹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Purcell, USA, "Operational Level Intelligence: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield," Unpublished Individual Study Project, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: 1989, p. 33.

¹⁹ Linden, p.33.

²⁰ Major John D. Frketic, USA, "Operational Intelligence and the U.S. Army: Much Ado About Nothing or Misunderstood Excellence? A Prescription for the 1990's and Beyond," Unpublished Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: 1989, p. 33.

The remaining concerns or "Priority Intelligence Requirements" and "Essential Elements of Information," while of great importance to operational planning and the subsequent execution of a campaign plan, may be looked at as enabling forces at both the Strategic and Tactical levels as well as ancillary functions at the Operational level. This general category is what may be regarded as Operational Intelligence, the "form" of intelligence.

Not to be thrown aside lightly, the necessity and volume of work inherent in satisfying Operational Intelligence will likely consume the vast majority of the intelligence effort at the Operational level. As Svechin stated, "Operational art should place the troops in the best possible tactical position."²¹ One could infer that Operational Intelligence has a vested interest in optimizing intelligence support throughout the Chain of Command, particularly to the Tactical level, in order to sustain that advantageous tactical position.

Why is this distinction of importance? After all, the J-2 is provided general guidance with regard to the nature of joint intelligence, particularly in the "Joint Intelligence Principles."²² While of some value, the "The Principles of Joint Intelligence" and "The Attributes of Intelligence Quality" encompassed therein (provided in Appendices A and B) are general

²¹ Svechin, p. 260.

²² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Operations, pp. IV-1 - IV-23.

in nature and may be perceived as giving only an ill-defined value to intelligence. The value of intelligence must be measured in terms of what it provides, rather than generic qualities.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS FOR THE J-2

As stated at the beginning, the JFC J-2 must recognize the overall Operational requirements for intelligence and translate them into a clear sense of direction for his or her intelligence organization. Otherwise, how does the J-2 determine whether the organization is doing its job? What measures of success can be used and are those measures valid or practical?

Unfortunately, after-action reports from exercises and real-world operations often focus on such items as percentage of RFIs satisfied or timeliness of intelligence advisories as quantifiable measures of success. True, these are easily measured, but they do not necessarily represent the overall success of the joint intelligence effort. Other questions dealing with elements critical to the JFC must also be asked. For example:

- Could enemy centers of gravity and/or decisive points be identified at both the Operational and Strategic levels? If so, were they able to be identified and factored into campaign planning?
- Could the success of the campaign against those centers of gravity and/or decisive points be determined? If so, was the campaign successful in those terms?

- Supplementing those already articulated by the JFC, were any additional, pertinent intelligence requirements identified? And was the J-2 able to satisfy them?
- Was the J2 able to ensure unity of intelligence effort through established goals, and was he or she able to articulate them throughout the intelligence organization?

Although not easily quantifiable, answers to questions such as these do reflect directly upon the success of the J-2 and the value of intelligence support.

CONCLUSION

The push for formalized joint intelligence doctrine continues. As stated in Joint Pub 2-0:

"A common doctrine, shared by all elements of a joint force and supporting organizations, increases the probability that responsive intelligence systems will provide JFCs with accurate, timely, relevant, and adequate intelligence. . . .Its application requires an understanding of the situation and judgment."²³

However, doctrine is only one of several tools to be judiciously used by the J-2 in ensuring a responsive intelligence support framework for the JFC.

This is not to say that the principles contained in existing documentation have little value, quite the contrary. Regardless, the J-2 must neither be overwhelmed nor enslaved by those principles. Whereas a rejection of doctrine would be foolish, a devotion to the same would be disastrous.

²³ Ibid., p. I-3.

Ultimately, the responsibility to develop and implement that framework lies with the J-2. No matter where he or she must operate along the range of military operations, the JFC J-2 must discern the Operational ends to which intelligence must serve and develop a complementary sense of direction for his or her organization. The Operational J-2 must perceive the "big picture" and his or her place in it.

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APPENDIX A

PRINCIPLES OF JOINT INTELLIGENCE

(Extracted from Joint Pub 2-0,
Chapter 4, Sections A-C)

KEY PRINCIPLE: Know the adversary.

BASIC PRINCIPLES:

- The Joint Forces Commander (JFC) is responsible for intelligence support to operations.
- Synchronize Intelligence with Operations.
- Use the same Approach for support of peacetime operations, operations other than war, and war.
- The J-2 should participate in decision and planning processes from the outset.
- Ensure unity of intelligence effort.
- Recognize counterintelligence as a source of information.
- Prioritize component intelligence requirements.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

- Constitute a Joint Intelligence Staff.
- View the adversary as joint or unified.
- Establish intelligence capabilities early.
- Ensure JFC intelligence requirements are completely understood by the J-2.
- Use operating forces for combat reporting.
- Analyze intelligence in context of operations.
- Use the Chain of Command to satisfy Requirements for Information (RFIs)
- Structure for continuous operations.

- Maintain flexibility.
- Make all organic intelligence capabilities available to the entire joint force.
- National and theater intelligence organizations should support joint operations.
- Keep intelligence current.
- Ensure accessibility of intelligence.
- Use an all-source approach.
- Distinguish between knowledge and assumptions.
- Use intelligence liaison.
- Use intelligence lessons learned.

APPENDIX B

ATTRIBUTES OF INTELLIGENCE QUALITY

(Extracted from Joint Pub 2-0,
Chapter 4, Section D)

- Timeliness:** Intelligence must be available and accessible in time to effectively use it.
- Objectivity:** Intelligence must be unbiased, undistorted, and free from political influence or constraint.
- Usability:** The form in which intelligence is provided to the commander must be suitable for application upon receipt without additional analysis.
- Readiness:** Intelligence organizations must anticipate and be ready to respond to the existing and contingent intelligence requirement of commanders, staff, and forces at all levels of command.
- Completeness:** Commanders, staffs, and forces must receive all the intelligence available to meet their responsibilities and accomplish their missions.
- Accuracy:** Intelligence must be factually correct and convey the situation as it actually exists.
- Relevance:** Intelligence must contribute to an understanding of the situation, to determining objectives that will accomplish the commander's purposes and intents, and to planning, conducting, and evaluating operations.